

# FLIGHT JACKET

Marine Corps Merit Award winning newspaper

Vol. 11 No. 45

Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif.

December 11, 2009

## Miramar Marines speed through competition



Cpl. Christopher O'Quin

Sgt. Ryan J. Ellis, a tactical air operations module operator with Marine Air Control Squadron 1, Marine Air Control Group 38, 3rd MAW, and 1st Lt. Adam R. Crandall, an air intelligence officer with Marine Aircraft Group 16, 3rd MAW, train for future competitions at Lake Miramar.

### Cpl. Christopher O'Quin COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Two 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing Marines spend countless hours conditioning their bodies on windswept hills, winding trails and worn pavement, not only for the rigors of combat, but the numerous races they face as elite Marine marathoners.

Sgt. Ryan J. Ellis and 1st Lt. Adam R. Crandall compete several times each year in different running events with the All-Marine Marathon team against other branches of service and civilians in world-wide competitions.

"The spectrum of runners is a lot broader than other running teams," said Ellis, who serves as a tactical air operations module operator with Marine Air Control Squadron 1, Marine Air Control Group 38, 3rd

MAW, I Marine Expeditionary Force. "That's what makes us truly unique, it's the fact that the team competes on high levels, on all distances with distance running."

Ellis, who has competed with the team since 2006, saw his commitment pay off when he became the first Marine to finish in the Marine Corps Marathon, Oct. 25.

"I get goose bumps thinking about coming across that finish line," said Ellis, a Redmond, Wash., native who finished the 26.2 mile run in 2:39:52. "Toward the end I was throwing my hands up cheering people on and they were cheering me on. Coming across that finish line was so emotional."

Joe Puelo, coach for the All-Marine Marathon team, assigns

GO TO **RUNNERS**, PAGE 3

## Recon Marines get a lift from 'Flying Tigers'



Cpl. Christopher O'Quin

Marines with 1st Reconnaissance Battalion, 1st Marine Division, I Marine Expeditionary Force, jump out of a CH-53E "Super Stallion," belonging to Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 361, Marine Aircraft Group 16, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, I MEF, during parachute operations training aboard Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton Dec. 2.

GO TO **TIGERS**, PAGE 5, 6

## Service members aim high at Opportunity Expo

### Cpl. Aubry L. Buzek COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

SAN DIEGO, Calif. – Transitioning service members and veterans invaded Qualcomm Stadium – but instead of rifles, these warriors carried resumes.

Over 380 military veterans, transitioning service members and military spouses put on their best business attire and picked up their briefcases for the 2009 Recruit Military Opportunity Expo at Qualcomm Stadium Dec. 3.

Recruit Military hosts 70 to 100 opportunity expos across the coun-

try each year, where many corporations, universities and government agencies recruit veterans for new careers.

Jasen Williams, the director of events and national accounts for Recruit Military, started his civilian career in the same shoes as many of the veterans at the event.

"I knew my home in the Marines, and I knew my job well, but I didn't know what I could bring to the civilian sector," said Williams.

As of September, the unemployment rate among Iraq and Afghanistan veterans reached 11.3 percent, according to the U.S. Department

of Labor. Transitioning military need to get started ahead of time to prepare for life after the military and avoid becoming another statistic, added Williams.

"A lot of them are getting out in a few months, and they need to start preparing," he said. "This is where we can get those conversations and connections started."

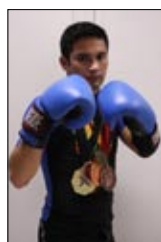
Many of the qualities the military ingrains in its members are the same qualities employers look for in prospective employees.

"Companies are being more

GO TO **EXPO** PAGE 3

MCAS Miramar  
Web site

www.miramar.usmc.mil



### MIRAMAR DEPENDENT BEATS THE ODDS WITH MMA

MCAS Miramar dependent loses arm but not his dream of fighting professionally. See page 4 for full story.



### LARCROSSE TEAM DREAMS TO BE ALL-MARINE

Many teams are sanctioned by the Corps but not lacrosse. Marines meet weekly aboard the air station in hopes of gaining recognition. See page 7 for full story.

REACH US



EDITORIAL  
858-577-6000



## FLIGHT JACKET



**Maj. Gen.  
Thomas L. Conant**  
Commanding General  
3rd Marine Aircraft Wing



**Col. Frank A. Richie**  
Commanding Officer  
MCAS Miramar

**Maj. Jay Delarosa**  
Public Affairs Director

**Master Sgt. Robert Knoll**  
Public Affairs Chief

**Staff Sgt. Bobbie Bryant**  
Internal Information Chief

**Sgt. Regina N. Cruz**  
Editor

**Lance Cpl. Zachary L. Majors**  
Layout and Design Specialist

The Flight Jacket is published every Friday. This newspaper is an authorized publication for the military services, contents of the Flight Jacket are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. government, the Department of Defense, Department of the Navy or U.S. Marine Corps. It is for informational purposes only and in no way should be considered directive in nature.

The editorial content is edited, prepared and provided by the Public Affairs Office. Comments or questions should be directed to 858-577-6000.



## Three weeks of knowledge, motivation at Corporals Course



**Cpl. Aubry L. Buzek**  
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

When my command informed me I would be attending the resident Professional Military Education Corporals Course at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, I'll admit I was a little nervous. There are many rumors about the new curriculum, and not a whole lot of graduates to give the scoop.

I did get some advice from fellow noncommissioned officers before leaving, but it was mostly misleading and conflicting with what I read about the course. One motivated NCO informed me he lost over 16 pounds the first week from all of the running, where the Marine Corps Times told me it

was less about running and more about alternative strengthening and fitness. Another told me I'd be "drilling until my head hurt," when I thought the general theme of the course is "more kill, less drill."

Although my trusted comrades had good intentions, all the big-fish stories I heard provided little guidance on how to prepare. I figured I would just have to find out for myself, so I packed my sea bags, threw on my alphas and jumped on the highway toward Camp Del Mar.

From the first day, almost everything I thought or heard about the course was disproved. My fear of the curriculum was alleviated as soon as I saw the course schedule. There would be no wall locker inspections, no formation marches to the mess hall, and no midnight hikes; just a knowledge-heavy three weeks of classes, customs and courtesies, physical training and enough drill to successfully work a guidon, sword and formation of Marines. The routine for the day started early in the morning and sometimes went until early evening, and was jam-packed with classes I haven't seen since Marine Combat Training.

The classes covered many ar-

eas of NCO subjects.

On the combat side, there were classes on patrolling, operational culture, war fighting and improvised explosive devices.

On the administrative side, there were classes on promotions, proficiency and conduct marks, public speaking and maintaining a duty log. Homework at night complemented the curriculum and often led to class discussions.

Although the curriculum was primarily classroom based, there was plenty of practical application. The class assembled and disassembled weapons at the armory, learned sword and guidon manual and drill on the parade deck, turned the camp into a land navigation course and held a warriors' night behind the schoolhouse.

The PT was harder than I expected, but it was rewarding. One day was a green-on-green early morning run through the sand on the beach at Camp Del Mar, the next day was a "boots-and-utes" platoon run with a stretcher, water jugs and M-16's. Although it was said early on there is less running, it still seems to be the main focus of most PT sessions.

The best part of the course, in my opinion, is the transformation in personalities from the beginning to the end. What started as a group of 108 semi-motivated corporals who mostly didn't want to be there turned into a group of loud NCOs screaming the Marine's Hymn and NCO creed. What helped with this transformation, at least in my case, was a major boost in confidence. The opportunity to lead Marines and call cadence in a classroom of peers, where students could make mistakes and learn from them without the pressure of doing it in front of subordinate Marines, made it much easier to absorb. There was little judgment, a lot of encouragement and a genuine interest in the students' success from the instructors.

I took away a lot of things from the course, but mostly I gained confidence and self-assurance, something that's not easily accomplished on your own. For any corporals apprehensive about taking the course, I say go for it and give it all you've got. You might be surprised about what you can learn and how much you'll grow in only three weeks.

## Religious Services

The Chaplain's Office, located in building 5632 on Bauer Road, coordinates regularly scheduled services. For the location and meeting schedules of religious activities, call 858-577-1333, or visit [www.miramar.usmc.mil](http://www.miramar.usmc.mil).

### Sunday:

9 a.m. Protestant Worship Service  
9:30 a.m. Protestant Children's Worship  
11 a.m. Roman Catholic Eucharist

### Religious Education/Sunday:

9:30 – 10:45 a.m. Catholic CCD Children K-12  
10 a.m. Protestant Adult Bible Study

### Weekday Worship Service:

Mon. – Fri. 11:30 a.m. Catholic Mass  
Mon. 6:30 p.m. Contemporary Praise and Worship Service  
Wed. 7 p.m. Baptist Service

### Study Groups:

Mon. 7 p.m. Night Bible Study, Classroom in the Chapel area  
Tues. 6 a.m. Morning Prayer Service and Study Group

### Islamic Worship Service:

Fri. at noon.

Located in the Chapel or visit [www.icsd.org](http://www.icsd.org)

### Jewish:

Jewish Outreach at 858-571-3444  
[www.jewishinsandiego.org](http://www.jewishinsandiego.org)



Last year's Toys for Tots campaign resulted in more than 175,000 toys being distributed to 57,000 less fortunate children in the greater San Diego area. This year the program plans to collect more toys and reach more children.

Personnel are needed for the following:

- Warehouse operations
- Sorting and distributing toys
- Drivers to pick up toys from local businesses
- Attend corporate and holiday events and more...

Volunteers may require Dress Blue B, C and D uniforms. To volunteer for the 2009 Toys for Tots Campaign, contact Sgt. Boyler at 858-537-8066.



# Now available on facebook



# Miramar celebrates holidays



Lance Cpl. Manuel F. Guerrero

Aurora and Dominick Davis, children of Sgt. Stefan G. Davis, a section noncommissioned officer in charge with the Installation Personnel Administration Center aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar tell Santa Claus their Christmas wishes during the Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron Christmas Party, Dec. 7.



Lance Cpl. Alexandra M. Harris

Families enjoy a ride at the Marine Corps Community Services' Children's Christmas Carnival at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar Dec. 5.



Lance Cpl. Zachary Majors

Approximately 300 Marines, sailors and civilians participated in Marine Corps Air Station Miramar's Jingle Bell Jog. The participants ran five kilometers while searching for 15 candy canes hidden along the route. Each candy cane could be traded for a prize at the end of the race.

## RUNNERS,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

workout routines for the runners and helps them improve their endurance and speed with sprints, long-distance runs and drills. They will run more than 80 miles in a week if preparing for a race.

Crandall and Ellis often run together and spur each other on to run faster. Their typical running gear consists of shorts, moisture wicking shirts and running shoes. On cold days they sport gloves and sweaters until they warm up.

Crandall, an air intelligence officer with Marine Aircraft Group 16, 3rd MAF, I MEF, trains with fixed determination, often pushing himself a little further than his training routine requires, to lower his marathon time of 2:29:52. He has been running competitively since age 11, and running with the team for more than a year.

"I've always wanted to be with a team like this," said Crandall, a Fulton, N.Y., native. "It's rewarding to be able to beat your body as hard as you possibly can on these runs and just improve yourself through this."

Crandall and Ellis will test their mettle against other Marines during the All-Marine Cross Country Championships at the Marine Corps Air Station Miramar Fish Pond Jan. 10, 2010.

Crandall and Ellis have no intentions of changing pace for the next several months and will continue to race, improving themselves on windswept hills, winding trails and worn pavement.



Lance Cpl. Steven H. Posy

Sgt. Joseph L. Dickens, the corrosion control's noncommissioned officer in charge at HMM -165, carries a tree from the trees for troops program by the Marine Corps Community Services here Dec. 3, 2009. The FedEx Christmas Spirit Foundation donated more than 100 trees to MCCA.

## EXPO,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

careful about where they're spending money," said Williams. "The military has a lot of important qualities imprinted on them."

Many of the companies at the career fair look for these leadership qualities. However, some gain more tangible benefits from hiring military. SC Field Technical Services, a company that provides technical and field service support to energy companies in California, looks for military because of security clearances.

"80 percent of our employees are veterans," said Chre Ligon, a human resources manager at SC Field Technical Services. "They have everything we are looking for: discipline, great attitudes and they aren't afraid of anything."

The jam-packed room was filled

with many prospective employees with very competitive resumes, all vying for the same jobs.

"It's a tough economy," said Chief Petty Officer Charles Richardson, Center for Surface Combat Systems Detachment San Diego. "There are a lot of people here. You have to come out and make yourself presentable and hopefully you'll get picked up."

Richardson said the qualities the military has given him that will benefit him most when transitioning into the civilian sector are the ability to lead and critical thinking.

Although the expo was only in town for one day, Recruit Military helps connect veterans with corporations for free online as well, with over 10,000 companies recruiting over 400,000 service members for jobs over the last 14 years, according to Williams.



# Marine's son overcomes odds in, out of ring



Lance Cpl. Justis Beauregard

Geoffrey Villarreal, son of Master Gunnery Sgt. Juan F. Villarreal, the assistant aircraft maintenance chief for Marine Fighter Attack Training Squadron 101, warms up before a training session at the MCAS Miramar Sports Complex.

## Lance Cpl. Justis T. Beauregard

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

Training in mixed martial arts is very popular, but only a select few have the mental and physical fortitude to step in the ring for a full contact fight, let alone single handed.

Geoffrey Villarreal, son of Master Gunnery Sgt. Juan F. Villarreal, the assistant aircraft maintenance chief for Marine Fighter Attack Training Squadron 101, was born 22 years ago in North Carolina, with one hand.

Although doctors don't know why, he believes it is likely because his hand pierced the amniotic sac inside the womb.

Now, Geoffrey is working to transition from competing in pankration and submission grappling to amateur MMA, with the dream of some day being the first one-handed professional MMA fighter.

"The only thing that worries me is getting knocked out" said Geoffrey. "I have before in kick boxing but I have learned how to protect myself, and what to avoid."

At first glance you may not expect

Geoffrey to be the skilled fighter that he is. Unlike some fighters you could pick out of a crowd, Geoffrey looks like most Californian college students with a button up shirt and blue jeans.

When the California Athletic Commission approved full contact amateur MMA fights last month and Geoffrey signed up with Grapplers Experience.

Geoffrey's last fight was in the 145-pound adult beginner pankration category at the Grappling X, Gi and No-Gi tournament in San Diego, Aug. 22. He took 1st place with ease, winning both of his rounds with an arm bar.

Although he would like to do nothing but train, Geoffrey heeded his parent's advice to receive a college education. He currently attends Mesa Community College, majoring in international security and conflict resolution.

With a deep seeded feeling of patriotism passed down from his father, Geoffrey plans to use his degree to pursue a job with the Federal Bureau of Investigation or the Central Intelligence Agency.

"My father was deployed when 9/11 happened and it was scary to know his deployment had changed to send him to the Middle East," said Geoffrey. "That is part of the reason I

would like to work in counter terrorism."

Ignoring the challenge of only having one hand Geoffrey started wrestling in elementary school.

"Geoffrey competing is scary because of his condition," said Juan. "But he always comes out on top."

Doctors told him in high school not to participate in contact sports after they discovered he suffered from a rare liver disease called Primary Sclerosing Cholangitis, which can cause liver failure.

"Once one of my friends noticed that my skin was turning yellow so I had to go to the hospital," said Geoffrey. "They had to remove a gallbladder infection which took me six weeks to recover from."

Geoffrey continued to wrestle despite periodic surgery for his rare disease.

"Every once in a while I have to get surgery but a week later I'm back on top," said Geoffrey. "In high school I was one of the strongest wrestlers on my team as far as my record and how I would train and win."

After his senior year at Yuma Catholic High School in Yuma, Ariz. Geoffrey started training in Brazilian Ju-Jitsu at Yuma Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu, run by Fabio Santos.

"I didn't get into MMA because it was trendy," said Geoffrey. "I saw MMA as something I could put effort into and apply what I had learned in wrestling."

Geoffrey easily transitioned to a studio in San Diego, also owned by Santos, a year later when his father received orders to Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego.

In addition to Santos' BJJ academy, Geoffrey also trains with the MCAS Miramar Submission Grappling Club.

"It's great he is willing to overcome and still train and compete," said Chief Warrant Officer 2 Christopher Diem, a USA Jiu-Jitsu certified instructor, with the grappling club. "He doesn't allow his hand to be a limitation."

Geoffrey continues to fight the odds in the cage and out, progressing from wrestling in elementary school to pankration tournaments with plans for full contact MMA fights.

"I'm not out to prove to everyone else that I can do anything-I'm proving to myself that I can do anything," said Geoffrey.



Lance Cpl. Justis Beauregard

Geoffrey Villarreal, son of Master Gunnery Sgt. Juan F. Villarreal, the assistant aircraft maintenance chief for Marine Fighter Attack Training Squadron 101, kicks the heavy bag at the MCAS Miramar Sports Complex. Geoffrey is training for his first full contact mixed martial arts fight.

**"I'm not out to prove to everyone that I can do anything - I'm proving to myself that I can do anything."**

**Geoffrey Villarreal, son of Miramar Marine**





# ‘FLYING TIGERS’ HELP RECON MARINES JUMP INTO TRAINING



Cpl. Aaron J. Barnes, a basic reconnaissance Marine with 1st Reconnaissance Battalion, 1st Marine Division, I Marine Expeditionary Force, hauls his parachute after jumping out of a CH-53E “Super Stallion” during parachute operations training aboard Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Dec. 2. Seconds after the Marines jumped out of the helicopter a release connected to a static line opened the parachutes and enabled safe landings.

**Story and photos by  
Cpl. Christopher O’Quin**  
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

**M**ARINE CORPS BASE CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. – The CH-53E “Super Stallion’s” size and operating range enables aircrew to bring dozens of Marines to remote combat zones, even when they prove unfit for landing and require troops to leap from thousands of feet. Marines with Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 361, Marine Aircraft Group 16, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, I Marine Expeditionary Force, helped more than 24 reconnaissance Marines and corpsmen conduct parachute operations training aboard Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, here Dec. 2.

“This type of insertion would happen in a raid to an area where we couldn’t put our CH-53E in the zone,” said Capt. Wes Matthews, a pilot with the squadron known as the “Flying Tigers.” “During this training we need to keep our bird steady and monitor our speed. If we fly too fast, the line of parachuting Marines will be spread out too far in the zone. You want to keep the Marines grouped close together.”

The Marines from 1st Reconnaissance Battalion, 1st Marine Division, I MEF, donned SF-10 parachutes and helmets to jump from more than 2,500 feet. The recon Marines slowly descended and worked to land close together after jumping from the Super Stallion.

“It was awesome jumping from the helicopter,” said Lance Cpl. Alex S. Hale, a reconnaissance Marine



Marines with 1st Reconnaissance Battalion, 1st Marine Division, I Marine Expeditionary Force, fasten and check their parachutes before boarding a CH-53E “Super Stallion” to conduct parachute operations training aboard Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Dec. 2. Jumpmaster or riggers also inspected the Marines parachutes before each jump to ensure a safe training environment.

with the battalion. “I like it because it’s a straight fall from the helicopter. There’s no wind whipping you around after you jump, like with a C-130.”

Marines attached releases to a static line connected to the Super Stallion’s deck to safely deploy their parachutes, while jump masters and crew chiefs prepared the groups for jumping.

The crew chief and aerial observer onboard kept keen eyes on the sky to ensure safe training.

“We were operating close to the air station here so we had to make sure there wasn’t any other traffic that could endanger us or the recon Marines,” said Cpl. Evan R. Shelton, a crew chief with the Flying Tigers. “After they jump, we make sure they reach the ground safely and monitor where they are drifting to the ground.”

After the Marines finished jumping, 10 of the Marines geared up with multi-mission parachutes, similar to those used by civilian skydivers. These experienced jumpers leaped from 10,000 feet.

“The Super Stallion is well suited for our operations,” said Master Gunnery Sgt. Brian R. Yarolem, battalion operations chief with the battalion. “Parachute operations are one of our mission essential tasks. With our last deployment in Iraq we did more than 1,000 jumps with the Super Stallion being one of our platforms.”

When these Marines deploy in the future, the training supported by the Flying Tigers here will help them one day drop into the fight, whether it be rocky mountains in Afghanistan, vast deserts in Iraq or the next unknown battlefield.

**“With our last deployment in Iraq we did more than 1,000 jumps with the Super Stallion being one of our platforms.”**

Master Gunnery Sgt. Brian R. Yarolem, battalions operations chief



Marines with 1st Reconnaissance Battalion, 1st Marine Division, I Marine Expeditionary Force, load onto a CH-53E “Super Stallion” belonging to Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 361, Marine Aircraft Group 16, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, I MEF, during parachute operations training aboard Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Dec. 2. Marines jumped from 10,000 feet using multi-mission parachutes, while others used SF-10 parachutes jumping from 2,500 feet.





Lance Cpl. Manuel F. Guerrero

Members of the Lacrosse team fight for the ball during a scrimmage held at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Saturday. The team holds practice every Wednesday afternoon and Saturday morning.

## Little-known lacrosse team has big dreams

**Lance Cpl.  
Manuel F. Guerrero**  
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

The Marine Corps currently sanctions 23 All-Marine teams ranging from basketball to chess, but not for the oldest Northern American sport created.

More than 20 Marines from military installations across Southern California meet aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar every Saturday morning and Wednesday afternoon to practice lacrosse.

The team started four years ago when Christopher R. Castleberry, team captain, started recruiting Marines interested in the sport. Marines interested can join anytime as long as they have gear for practices and scrimmages.

In the past five months, the team has seen an influx of Marines interested in joining the physical sport, which has helped them get recognition.

"Marines are always approaching us during practice all the time," said Nicholas S. Samaras, a mid-fielder for the squad. "It's encouraging to see people interested."

The bid to make the team an All-Marine team has not come without work. Members of the team play against college and semi-professional teams, and they competed in the 2009 Hawaii Lacrosse Invitational. They are also

slated to host a Wounded Warrior tournament next year, bringing top lacrosse competition to the air station.

Some members of the team have had dialogue with Headquarters Marine Corps regarding how to make lacrosse an All-Marine Sport. The progress has been slow but everything they do is geared on recognizing them as All Marine, commented Castleberry.

"We've pushed it pretty hard," said Castleberry, who hopes to have an All-Marine lacrosse team by next year. "We're staying with it and doing the right things to get recognized."

Since the team has expanded recently, members can now focus on building team camaraderie and playing the game they love.

"We're definitely starting to get more of a bond as a team lately," said Brian J. Foersch, an attacker for the team.

The fast-paced and physical game of lacrosse is played on a 110 yard-long field with four quarters ranging from 10 to 15 minutes. Teams play 11-players deep with four key positions: goalie, defensemen, mid-fielders and attackers.

Although the team does not have a set name, members know that if they stay the course, they will have an All-Marine team when it's all said and done.

## Recap of Week 13, playoff picture



**Lance Cpl.  
Manuel Guerrero**  
COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

*Editor's note: Lance Cpl. Guerrero is a regular contributor to the sports section of the Flight Jacket and an avid sports fan.*

After week 13, the playoff picture got a lot more clear or blurry, depending on what conference you look at.

There are only a handful of teams still alive in the NFC's Wild Card race while about half of the teams in the AFC still have playoff aspirations.

In the NFC, the Philadelphia Eagles and Green Bay Packers have pulled away from the pack. They sit pretty at 8-4 each and control their own destiny, with only the New York Giants and Atlanta Falcons with an outside chance of making a run.

The Atlanta Falcons didn't help their slim playoff hopes last week. They got blown out by the surging Philadelphia Eagles, 34-7. They did play without three of their starting offensive weapons to include Matt Ryan, Michael Turner and Michael Jenkins last week. Maybe they could have used Michael Vick, the fans wanted him.

The Giants helped their cause by defeating the NFC East division leaders Dallas Cowboys last week, 24-31. They not only have a shot in the Wild Card Race but also their division.

The only other wrinkle I foresee in the NFC is if the Dallas Cowboys have another December collapse like they have in years

past. They already showed signs of that last week by losing to the New York Giants last week, 24-31. The NFC East is the only division in the conference that is yet to be decided.

On the other side of the table, the AFC Wild Card Race has eight teams vying for two spots with the Denver Broncos at 8-4 and Jacksonville Jaguars at 7-5 on top. Six teams are separated by two games in the race.

The defending champs, the Pittsburgh Steelers, are one of those teams struggling to get in the playoffs, thanks to four straight losses. Most recently last week's, 30-27, loss to the Bruce Gradkowski-led Oakland Raiders. They need to right the ship or they will be on the outside looking in.

The team to keep an eye on for the remainder of the season is the, 6-6, Miami Dolphins who only face other wild card contenders the rest of the way. Right now, they are on the outside looking in as well but they passed their first test by squeezing by the once-feared New England Patriots last week, 22-21. Their remaining schedule includes the Jacksonville Jaguars, Titans, Houston Texans and Pittsburgh, which are all teams that are in the hunt in the AFC.

Now that I have exhausted the Wild Card races, it's time to shine light on the teams that have better things to worry about like clinching divisions and home-field advantage.

Apparently Peyton Manning reads my sports commentary every week, because he decided to show me up. I predicted them to lose their first game of the season against the Tennessee Titans and Indy responded. They defeated the red-hot Titans handily, and Peyton went 24-37 with 270 yards, a touchdown.

How about them New Orleans Saints? I mean really, who else watched their amazing comeback against the Washington Redskins

last week? They pulled off the improbable against the Redskins, coming back from ten points behind and pulling off their 12th victory of the season in overtime.

The Redskins had a golden opportunity to knock off the talented Saints but they had several key miscues which the Saints took advantage of; most notably a missed chip-shot field goal attempt by Shaun Suisham late in the fourth quarter that would have iced the game. The Saints and Drew Brees seem to be the team of destiny this year.

Like I said in my previous commentary, the Sunday Night Football Game was going to be closer than everyone thought. Not many people gave the Arizona Cardinals a chance against the ten-win Minnesota Vikings. What happened? The Cardinals stymied the Vikings in every facet of the game with their stingy defense and razor-sharp offense and timely special teams play. Kurt Warner masterfully carved up the Vikings' defense going 22-32 with 285 yards and three touchdowns. The Cardinals seem to have recaptured the magic they had during their improbable Super Bowl run last year with their 30-17 victory. They can clinch their second consecutive NFC West Championship with a win on Monday night against the 49ers.

With their seventh straight victory, Phillip Rivers and San Diego Chargers are surging at the right time. I won't say too many Chargers' references this time but this team is playing electrifying football, getting even more dangerous as the regular season winds down.

As you can see, there is much to be decided thus far, but one thing is for sure, it's going to be an interesting last couple of weeks to the regular season. So grab the popcorn and enjoy another full slate of NFL Football the next couple of weeks.



# GOOD LUCK FALCONS!



## FRIDAY 11 SATURDAY 12 SUNDAY 13 MONDAY 14 TUESDAY 15 WEDNESDAY 16 THURSDAY 17

• **Holiday Classic T-Shirt Pool Tournament**  
7:30 p.m.  
The Great Escape  
858-577-6171

**MCCS free prize giveaways...**  
Entertainment Ticket Office  
*SeaWorld Gift Pack*  
*Stop in and fill out an entry form today!*  
*Winners will be drawn on Dec. 31.*

### WEEKLY EVENTS...

- Sports Complex Marine Teen training Tues. & Sat. 858-577-4128/4129
- Deployment support for preschoolers, elementary and teenagers Mon. through Wed. 858-577-4588

• **SMP Magic Mountain Trip**  
**\$25 per person**  
to register call  
858-577-6171

• **9-Ball Pool Tournament**  
7:30 p.m.  
The Great Escape  
858-577-6171



• **NFL Sunday Ticket**  
9 a.m.  
Legends Sports Grill  
858-693-1543



Paintball Mega Arena open every Saturday and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. east of the Miramar Inn 619-228-4446.

• **TAMP/TAP (Senior) Retiree Transition Class**, 7:15 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., The Hub, 858-577-6710

• **Alcoholics Anonymous and Al-Anon Meetings**  
6:30 p.m.  
Counseling Center  
858-577-6585

### Shop at the MCX

**Gifts to Go Sale**  
Nov. 11 - Dec. 24

**Holiday Fragrance Sale**  
Nov. 4 - Dec. 24

**Holiday Beauty Sale**  
Nov. 4 - Dec. 24



• **Free QOL Golf**  
Two hours after twilight  
for Miramar active duty  
858-577-4155

• **Adecco Staffing Agency Visit**  
9 a.m. - Noon  
Career Resource Center  
858-577-6710

• **R. Lee Ermey Appearance for Toys for Tots**  
11 a.m. - 2 p.m.  
MCX main store  
858-577-6710  
*\*see below*

• **L.I.N.K.S. for Marines for Toys for Tots**  
12:30. - 4:30 p.m.  
MCX main store  
858-577-6710

• **DUB Magazine Live**  
*\*see below*

• **Exceptional Family Member "Coffee Break"**  
11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.  
L.I.N.K.S. House  
858-577-4668

• **Free Golf Clinic for Active Duty**  
11:45 a.m. - 1 p.m.  
Golf Course  
858-577-4155

• **Career Resource Center "Job Search Strategies"**  
1 - 3 p.m.  
The HUB  
858-577-6710

• **Right Hand Man Night**  
4 - 6p.m.  
Officers' Club  
858-577-4808

• **Successful Parenting**  
9 - 11 a.m.  
Counseling Center  
858-577-6585 to register

• **R. Lee Ermey Appearance for Toys for Tots**  
11 a.m. - 2 p.m.  
MCX main store  
858-577-6710  
*\*see below*

• **Stress Management I and II**  
1 - 4 p.m.  
Counseling Center  
858-577-6585 to register

• **MCCS Family Appreciation Free Movie Day**  
2 p.m.  
Bob Hope Theater  
858-577-6365  
*\*see below*

"Providing over 100 programs for you and your family"



- ★ Marine & Family Services
- ★ Marine Corps Family Team Building
- ★ Semper Fit & Recreation
- ★ Free Special Events
- ★ Dining & Clubs
- ★ Shopping & Services

**"Serving Those Who Serve"**  
[www.mccsmiramar.com](http://www.mccsmiramar.com)

### DUB Magazine Live At Marine Mart

DUB Magazine Live is coming to Marine Mart on Tues., Dec. 15 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. DUB Magazine Live is an exciting interactive custom car, truck and bike event experience. Stop by and enter to win a free set of TIS rims.

### Toys for Tots Autograph Signing

Bring your cameras and your new unwrapped toys to the main exchange this Tuesday and Thursday for two Toys for Tots autograph signings. On both Tues., Dec. 15 and Thurs., Dec. 17 from 11 a.m. - 2 p.m., R. Lee Ermey, star of Full Metal Jacket and the History Channel's Mail Call will be at the main exchange to sign photos in exchange for a new unwrapped toy to be donated to Toys for Tots.

### Exceptional Family Member Program "Coffee Break"

Join the Exceptional Family Member Program for a "Coffee Break" the third Thursday of every month with the next one being held on Wed., Dec. 16 from 11:30 a.m. - to 12:30 p.m. in the L.I.N.K.S. House. The "Coffee Break" will be a morning of socializing and sharing of ideas. Call 858-577-4668 for more information.



### Get help paying for child care

Visit the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies Web site at [www.naccrra.org](http://www.naccrra.org) to see information on eligibility for assistance to pay for and find child care services. Contact 1-800-424-2246 for more information.

### Wounded Warrior Regiment Warrior Games

The Warrior Games will take place May 10-14, 2010, at the US Training Center in Colorado Springs, Colo. This program is designed to

elevate abilities through athletic competition for wounded, ill and injured service members. Applications will be accepted starting this month. For more information, e-mail [WWRWarriorGames@usmc.mil](mailto:WWRWarriorGames@usmc.mil).

### Great Escape Holiday Food Drive

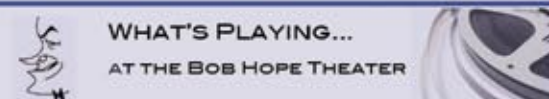
Now until Dec. 16, the Great Escape located in The Hub is accepting canned goods and non-perishable items for their Holiday Food Drive. For more information contact 858-577-6283 or the Great Escape at 858-577-6171.

### Free Gift Wrapping

From Dec. 1 - 26, the Great Escape staff is offering gift wrapping services for active duty enlisted personnel. The first two gifts are wrapped for free, additional gifts cost \$1 each. Supplies are provided for those who want to wrap their own gifts. For more information, call 858-577-6171.

### Officers Wives' Club Christmas Party

Come join the Officers Wives' Club Dec. 11 from 6 - 8:30 p.m. at the Officers' Club for food, fun, raffles, silent auctions and an ornament competition.



### Fri. Dec. 11:

Astro Boy (PG) 6:30 p.m.  
Amelia (PG) 9 p.m.

### Sat. Dec. 12:

Michael Jackson's This Is It (PG) 6:30 p.m.  
Cirque Du Freak : The Vampires' assistant (PG-13) 9 p.m.

### Sun. Dec. 13:

\*Where The Wild Things Are (PG) 1 p.m.  
\*Law Abiding Citizen (R) 6:30 p.m.

### Wed. Dec. 16:

The Fourth Kind (PG-13) 6:30 p.m.

### Thurs. Dec. 17:

Free Admission: Astro Boy (PG) 2 p.m.  
Michael Jackson's This Is It (PG) 6:30 p.m.  
**\*indicates last showing**

*\*Indicates Last Showing*



**OWC  
HOHOHO**

**December**

**11th**

**6-8:30 pm**

**O'club**

**Entryway**



**Be you Naughty or Nice,  
Come out for the Fun.  
There will be Raffles,  
Silent Auctions, an  
Ornament Competition,  
and appetizers in the bar.**



# 2009 Military Mail and International Christmas Mailing Dates

To ensure delivery of holiday cards and packages by Dec. 25, to military APO/FPO addresses overseas and to international addresses, the United States Postal Service suggests that packages and letters be mailed by the recommended mailing dates listed below. Beat the last-minute rush and take your mail to your U.S. Post Office by these suggested dates.

Mail addressed to military post offices overseas is subject to certain conditions or restrictions regarding content, preparation, and handling. APO/FPO addresses require a completed U.S. Customs form for all letters and packages weighing over 13 ounces <http://www.usps.com/supportingourtroops/>.

The air station’s Station Post Office has a complete listing of active APO and FPO addresses and each location’s current mailing restrictions.

As always, the average number of days for delivery may vary based upon your package’s origin and destination.

First-class and priority mail for service members stationed in Afghanistan should be sent by Dec. 4 for arrival by Christmas. The deadline for parcel airlift mail is Dec. 1, and space-available mail bound for Afghanistan should be sent by Nov. 21.

## Military mail:

EMMS:    FIRST CLASS:    PRIORITY:    SPACE AVAILABLE:    PARCEL POST:

Dec 18                      Dec 11                      Dec 11                      Nov 27                      Nov 13

- EMMS: Express Mail Military Service
- Check with your local Post Office to determine if EXPRESS MAIL service is available to your APO/FPO Address destination.

Priority mail packaging products, including priority mail flat-rate boxes can be obtained free at any post office, or online at <http://shop.usps.com>. The priority mail large flat-rate box can be used to mail to any overseas military address, no matter the weight of the box, for \$11.95.

The Postal Service offers free military care kits, designed for military families sending packages overseas. To order by phone, call 800-610-8734 and ask for the military care kit. Each kit includes two “America Supports You” large priority mail flat-rate boxes, four medium-sized priority mail flat-rate boxes, six priority mail labels, a roll of priority mail tape and six customs forms with envelopes. The Postal Service offers free military care kits, designed for military families sending packages overseas.



## INTERNATIONAL MAIL

ADDRESSED TO:    GXG:    EMS:    PMI:    FIRST CLASS:

|                  |        |        |        |        |
|------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Africa           | Dec 22 | Dec 12 | Dec 4  | Dec 4  |
| Asia/Pacific Rim | Dec 21 | Dec 17 | Dec 11 | Dec 11 |
| Australia        | Dec 21 | Dec 17 | Dec 11 | Dec 11 |
| Canada           | Dec 23 | Dec 18 | Dec 11 | Dec 11 |
| Caribbean        | Dec 22 | Dec 17 | Dec 11 | Dec 11 |
| South America    | Dec 22 | Dec 12 | Dec 4  | Dec 4  |
| Mexico           | Dec 23 | Dec 17 | Dec 11 | Dec 11 |
| Europe           | Dec 22 | Dec 17 | Dec 11 | Dec 11 |
| Middle East      | Dec 22 | Dec 17 | Dec 11 | Dec 11 |

- GXG: Global Express Guaranteed
- EMS: Express Mail International
- PMI: Priority Mail International

GXG is available to over 190 countries via an alliance with Federal Express. EMS is available to over 190 countries with delivery in 3 to 5 average business days. PMI is available to over 190 countries with delivery in 6 to 10 average business days. Flat-rate shipping options and packaging are available. for additonal information contact the post office at 858-577-1329. for any questions.

